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A S S O C I A T I O N
—OF—
P E N N S Y L V A N I A



PUBLIC CHARITIES PUBLICATIONS 1.



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OBJECTIVES

The entire elimination of "politics" from the State's charitable system.

The adoption of a sound State policy in making charitable appropriations—based on scientific standards and classifications.

The development of an adequate system of State institutions before extending State aid to local charities under private management.

The segregation of all feeble-minded persons by 1918.

Adequate care for the insane and the adoption of preventive measures against insanity as an auxiliary to State care.

The immediate removal of all children from almshouses.

The providing of adequate State or county care for the tuberculous within five years.

The establishment of a State Industrial Home for women and the modernizing of State penitentiaries and county jails.

The adoption of more modern and scientific methods in dealing with inebriety and vagrancy.

The strengthening of probation work and methods, particularly for adult offenders.

THE PUBLIC CHARITIES ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA

The saying, "What is everybody's business is nobody's business," is strikingly pertinent in the case of the public charities of practically every State. While the welfare of the majority of charities under private support and management is a matter of much concern to the managers and their friends, much less thought is bestowed on county, municipal and State philanthropies. In the case of a private charity, committees from the board visit and supervise its work, and in some cases such important administrative functions as the admission and discharge of beneficiaries are performed by the charitably inclined men and women who constitute the board of managers. Public meetings and fairs are held, money is raised, reports are issued, and a large group of people are thus informed and interested in the work of the society.

With the public charities, however, the situation is somewhat different. The managers are elected or appointed State or county officials. In the case of county institutions there is no board of managers, money is raised by taxation and reports, if issued, usually come out months after the period covered by the report and seldom find their way to the general body of citizens. As a consequence, the public charities of the State as a rule receive less attention (except when abuses are exploited in the daily press) and are often subject to neglect or political control, or both.

Because of these conditions, some of the Eastern States have found it to their advantage to establish associations of public-spirited men and women to focus public attention on the charities of the county and State, with the object of raising the standard of administration and thereby insuring to the beneficiaries more humane attention. The notable example of such

an organization is the State Charities Association of New York, which was established in 1873 as a small committee of New York women of high social standing, who visited Bellevue Hospital, then the sole public charitable institution of the city. As time went on other county and city committees were formed and new activities undertaken, until at the present time the Association has committees in each county and city of the State, a staff of secretaries and agents and is spending approximately one hundred thousand dollars per year for the improvement of the public charities of the State. Some of the results of the activities of this organization have been the constitutional recognition of the State Board of Charities as a supervisory department of the State government; the separation of the Department of Charities from that of Correction in the City of New York; the abolition of the municipal policy of unrestricted appropriations to private charities; the establishment of a number of needed State institutions for the care of delinquents and the feeble-minded; and the prosecution of a State-wide campaign for complete public care for all cases of tuberculosis by 1915.

The success of the New York Association has been followed by the establishment of similar societies in New Jersey and other states.

One may reasonably ask why is a Public Charities Association needed in Pennsylvania. One reason for such an association is the alarming increase in the State's expenditures for charity in recent years without a corresponding extension of care for the State's legitimate wards. In 1875 the State appropriated \$1,376,675.00 to 21 organizations. In 1911 some 300 agencies of a charitable nature received from the State Legislature appropriations which amounted to sixteen millions of dollars, the equivalent of a tax of more than two dollars per head upon every man, woman and child in the State. This does not include 200 or more county, district and municipal institutions, whose management is too often merely an incident of county administration,

and therefore subject to neglect or political control. No careful classification has been made of these 500 or more institutions, nor has any comprehensive State policy been outlined. At the present time appropriations are made to them largely on the basis of influence and pressure exerted on the Legislature rather than upon the State's obligation in the premises. This obligation has never been defined nor a sound State policy established on the basis of that obligation. This absence of a carefully defined policy, coupled with the liberality of the Legislature, has resulted in the development of a large number of institutions not essential to the charitable system of the State, but nourished by the State's bounty. An organization of disinterested citizens would study this situation without prejudice and present to the Legislature suggestions for a carefully considered State policy in the matter which, without hardship to any legitimate interests, would enable the State to develop a better organized charitable system.

Furthermore, a State consciousness of its charitable problems must be developed and fostered on the foundations already laid in various localities of the State, and a united effort made to meet the situation effectively. Hitherto, those interested in local charities of the State have thought too largely in terms of their own institutions and communities, and of the State chiefly as a source of support for their own institutions. On this foundation may be established a conviction of responsibility and of opportunity for service to the State, with a recognition of the fact that these local institutions are all members of one body, viz: the State's charitable system, and that no charitable unit can reach its fullest usefulness so long as the framework of that body is ineffectively organized and developed.

In the third place, a more complete and effective system of State charities is needed. The more obvious weaknesses in the present system are the inadequacy of care for the feeble-minded, particularly feeble-minded women, who are left free to reproduce their

kind and multiply the charitable burdens of the State; the overcrowding of State hospitals and the lack of preventive methods in the care of the insane; the absence of a State reformatory for women; the detention of children in almshouses sometimes beyond the legal period of sixty days; the failure of the State to provide adequately and systematically for the care of dependent children; the improper association forced on the inmates of county almshouses and jails in a number of counties and the pitiful weakness of the State's supervision and regulation of public charities.

Among other things to be done may be mentioned the need for a codification of the charitable laws of the State, for securing adequate support for State institutions, for the development and improvement of probation work in the State, for the encouragement of improved methods in dealing with vagrants and inebriates by cities and counties, and for a more efficient method of building State institutions than the present commission system, which has been a source of scandal too frequently in recent years.

At a special meeting held in connection with the State Conference at Wilkes-Barre, at which were present approximately one hundred active workers in the field of philanthropy, the following resolution was adopted:

"WHEREAS, There is in Pennsylvania no social agency whose function it is to mould, crystallize and articulate public opinion on matters pertaining to the policy, functions and standards of administration of the public and private charitable agencies of the State, and

"WHEREAS, There is no agency to function as a legislative bureau, in the formulation, coordination and active agitation for such legislation as vitally concerns the social workers of this State, and

"WHEREAS, Some agency to discharge these functions is a present need in the social equipment of Pennsylvania; therefore, be it

"RESOLVED, That it is the sense of those assembled at a special meeting, of which due notice was given, that the chair shall appoint a committee of five or more individuals, with

power to add to their number, of whom the President of the State Board of Charities shall be one, to proceed with the organization of a body, whose functions shall be similar to those of the State Charities Aid Associations of other states, provided, that this committee, after investigation, shall find that way opens for the formation of such a body at this time."

Every officer and member of the Board of Managers of every State institution should be interested in the Association, because it will develop increased attention to the needs of these institutions.

Every manager and officer of private charities, whether in receipt of State appropriations or not, should be interested, because sudden or ill-considered changes in the present system would work hardship to individual charities and injure the State as a whole.

Every taxpayer, either direct or indirect, is interested, because the absence of a sound State policy has cost the State millions of dollars annually during the past ten years and will cost the State an increasing amount each year until a more carefully defined policy is adopted.

The members of the Board of Managers of the Association are men and women of the highest standing, with a clear-sighted and unselfish interest in the charitable and correctional work of the State. Its management represents all sections of the State. The Association must and will have adequate financial support. The general membership of such an organization will be composed only of people of high standing in their communities. Its constant policy will be to uphold the welfare of the State's charities against captious criticism, private interests or political interference.

FUNCTIONS

To improve through visits, reports and recommendations the administration of the charitable, correctional and reformatory institutions managed and supported by the State, or by counties and cities, so that more efficient and humane care may be given the State's wards.

To secure such legislation and the enforcement of existing legislation as will develop a comprehensive and well-articulated system of public charities and reformatories commensurate with the State's needs.

To keep the public informed by correspondence, publication and public meetings of social conditions in the State and of the requirements of the State's charitable, penal and reformatory institutions.

To advocate throughout the State such sound policies and approved methods in the field of philanthropy and reformation as will tend toward the prevention of dependency and crime and the reduction of the rapidly increasing burden which present social conditions now impose on the Commonwealth.

What Informed Citizens Think of a Public Charities Association.

Alexander Johnson, Secretary, National Conference of Charities:

"I am inclined to believe that the best thing for Pennsylvania under all circumstances would be a State Charities Aid Association."

Hon. George W. Guthrie, former Mayor of Pittsburgh:

"There is hardly any question more urgent than that which affects the public charities of this State. I will be very glad to do anything in my power to support any movement which gives even a hope of better things. The names of the people connected with your movement commend it very strongly to me."

Robert K. Young, formerly Auditor General, State Treasurer:

"Can only say that I shall be glad to be identified with the organization of such an Association, and will contribute as far as possible to the furtherance of its very desirable and much-needed ends."

Hon. A. B. Farquhar, Chairman National Conservation Association:

"I look upon the work you have in hand as of the utmost importance."

J. M. Murdoch, M. D., Superintendent State Institution for the Feeble-Minded, Polk, Pa.:

"I believe a State Charities Association established according to the plan you outline would be of great benefit both to the charities and the State."

Homer Folks, Secretary, State Charities Aid Association of New York:

"The argument for such an association seems to me conclusive, and the statement of the proposed functions and objectives admirable. I need not say that we in the State Charities Aid Association will be most interested in the development of a sister organization, and that we would wish to render any assistance at any time within our power."

